

BlackBook

Weekend in The Berkshires: The Elegant New Williams Inn Brings the Farmhouse Chic



When summer's life-sucking humidity finally lifts, autumn's crisp air always feels extraordinarily invigorating. And as Mother Nature's pageantry begins to unfold in a patchwork of golds, reds, and yellows, we always find ourselves yearning for the ideal road trip in which to immerse ourselves in said colors.

Now, while we love the [Catskills](#)' bohemian vibe and [Manchester](#), Vermont's rustic-coziness, the rolling hills of the [Berkshires](#) in western Massachusetts – just a few hours from NYC – offer a more sophisticated getaway, one that seamlessly blends nature with the arts (and a good hike or two, if you're up for it).

Recently, we were drawn to the just-opened [Williams Inn](#), located in, naturally, [Williamstown](#) – since an interesting new hotel always piques our curiosity. Surrounded by the Williams College campus, it reflects the vibrancy of the local community as much as it does its historic academic roots. Indeed, its stately stone-covered / farmhouse-colonial façade has been thoughtfully designed to blend into the college's mélange of ivy-covered collegiate and increasingly modernist architecture.

Just inside, we were greeted by a roaring fire in the stone hearth and invited to relax in plush seating with a view of the hotel's gardens. Upstairs, our room (there are 64 of them, so yes, it's a hotel, not a B&B) was surprisingly spacious and almost ridiculously comfortable, with local wood and stone elements, eclectic furnishings and soothing color schemes.

We probably could have relaxed in the hotel all day – but we came also for the nature...and there was really rather a lot to choose from. Williamstown is actually just minutes from Mount Greylock, in the town of Adams. Technically part of the [Taconic Mountain](#) range, it's the highest peak in Massachusetts, and offered panoramic, Instagram-worthy views of five states at its summit (we think we might have even seen Russia from there). The mountain road is only open to autos from late May through November, but its spectacular network of hiking trails, including the [Appalachian Trail](#), is open year round. For those who prefer a more leisurely stroll, there are plenty of easy [walking trails](#) within a short drive as well.

Being the cultural sorts that we are, the [Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art](#) (MASS MoCA) in North Adams is always a must for us – and currently on show are exhibitions of works by the likes of Annie Lennox and Anselm Kiefer. [The Clark](#) and [Williams College Museum of Art](#) are both top class cultural institutions – and Williams College boasts a highly regarded [theater program](#), which hosts pizza-fueled discussions every Friday at noon.

We always love to feed our literary appetites with visits to [The Mount](#), Edith Wharton's palatial home and extensive gardens in Lenox, and [Herman Melville's](#) house, Arrowhead, in nearby Pittsfield, where he wrote *Moby Dick*, *Israel Potter* and *The Piazza Tales*.

Back at the hotel, we took leisurely cocktails by the inviting fire pit, before heading into [The Barn Kitchen + Bar](#), the rustically stylish farm-to-table restaurant serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The kitchen is headed by Chef Kevin DeMarco, formerly of the Forbes Five-Star Relais & Châteaux Castle Inn in Newport, and offers a fresh vision of the region's culinary traditions.

Menus will change seasonally and are heavily sourced by nearby farms and purveyors such as Maple Brook Farms and Cricket Creek cheeses, and locally sourced produce, meat, and poultry from Red Shirt Farm and Mighty Food Farm. Even the cocktails get their flavor from Berkshire Mountain Distillers (tip: try the unbelievably smooth and flavorful [Berkshire Bourbon](#)).

We started by sharing the cornmeal crusted calamari with a slightly spicy pimentón aioli, and the grass fed meatballs served alongside rosemary-laced focaccia. Entrees rose above the standard sylvan New England fare, with standouts including the crispy skin chicken with stone-ground polenta, and the all-natural double cut pork chop with saffron vegetables. We highly recommend adding a side of very on-trend parmesan fries with truffle aioli – they’re truly unforgettable.

As ever, the Berkshires seduced us with their unspeakable beauty, charm, and character – and in the [Williams Inn](#), there’s at last a hotel in which to stay there in style.